

Journal Theme: Reflections

*“May we understand
ourselves and those
around us a bit
better as we take
time to reflect.”*

Susan Whiteland
Arkansas State University
Angela LaPorte
University of Arkansas
Liz Langdon
University of Kansas

To correspond with the authors regarding
this article:
swhiteland@astate.edu
alaporte@uark.edu
lizlangdon@ku.edu

The theme for Volume 4 of the International Journal of Lifelong Learning in Art Education is Reflections. When the call went out for manuscripts to consider we asked prospective contributors to consider several questions: what does a reflection look like; what can be reflected in art education; in what ways does art making provide opportunities for reflection; and how can the process of reflecting impact lifelong learning. The authors in this issue have addressed these questions.

Pam Lawton and Angela LaPorte begin the conversation by answering the question, what does a reflection look like as they introduce readers to artist educator, Pearl Greenberg (1927-2020) using the lens of portraiture research. In their article, Pearls of Wisdom: A Portrait of Artist-Educator Pearl Greenberg, they hold up the reflecting mirror to let us examine an influential arts education advocate who in the words of colleague, M. DeSiano, “had extraordinary leadership skills”; “a mind for details and command of art education history” and “pedagogy that enabled Pearl to be an effective source for the betterment of art education”. Lawton and LaPorte share stories from their own experience with Pearl Greenberg that tell of her passion for quality art education for all ages and her vision to support lifelong learning. They also share recollections from others who were mentored by Pearl and felt she held a lasting influence on their life.

Greenberg’s reflection can be viewed in the purpose statement of the Lifelong Learning in Art Education interest group of the National Art Education Association (NAEA) that advocates supporting art education as a meaningful endeavor worthy of involvement throughout the lifespan. Just as Pearl Greenberg taught, wrote about, and participated in formal and informal art experiences for young people as well as older adults, the Lifelong Learning in Art Education interest group commits to offering resources, guidance and recognition to those who are engaged with initiatives to further art education designed for lifelong learning. It is with this intent that in honor of Pearl Greenberg the Committee on Lifelong Learning (LLL) have established the Pearl Greenberg Award for Teaching and Research in Lifelong Learning. The award seeks to recognize at the national level an artist/educator/researcher who has made distinguished contributions to the field of art education in advancing art experiences for older adults, research on the benefits of art for the aging, and/or intergenerational arts learning programs. The LLL interest group is currently receiving nominations for the next Pearl Greenberg Award. Nominations may be submitted at the following link: <https://bit.ly/3Ex5bQn>.

The second article in this issue by Pamela Lawton, Pearl Greenberg Award Lecture, describes how Pearl has influenced Lawton professionally. We are fortunate to have Pamela reflect on how Pearl’s philosophy about extending art education through lifelong learning influenced her life’s work of age inclusive, community-based art education with her pre-service students and other

populations. She clearly exemplifies a researcher-teacher who has committed to the transformational possibilities for lifelong learning in the field of art education.

Liberation Kitchen: Annotating Intergenerational Conversations Among Black Women in Art and Education by gloria wilson, Amber Coleman, Pamela Lawton, and Asia Price shows what can be reflected in pursuing art learning through arts-based research and shared conversations.

This article shares, annotates and archives stories of four Black art educators that formed a multi-generational group. It iterates supportive/generative conversations like those held round the kitchen table, marked by active listening and shared stories. The Black women art educators who joined in this dialogue, first as members of a conference panel and then virtually, found the support of the unfolding dialogue around their art and stories uniquely liberating. Theorizing through Black Feminism and Afrofemcentrism, in a profession marked by its White dominant history, lends power to their methodology called Liberation Kitchen. The authors share their art, reflective of expansive identities, to add to the conversation and illustrate the strength drawn from arts-based research. They present their exchanges as necessary provocation for thinking about the need of mentorship strategies and career pathways for supporting Black women and others from marginalized groups in the pursuit of art education.

Becoming Magic: Acquiring the Artist Identity by Kathleen Unrath, Karen Shortt-Stout, and Amy Ruopp reflect on their understanding of how a student/teacher/aspirant becomes an artist and the conditions that may facilitate this type of self-actualization. Reflective quotations from the pre-service art educator offer accounts of the magical transformative process of acquiring an artist identity and what that means to become an artist through interwoven experiences of art teaching, art making, and reflective narrative, using an a/r/tographical lens of inquiry.

Transformative Learning Through Bookmaking in a Black Women's Art Collective by Adjoa Jackson Burrowes is a visual essay that exemplifies how art making can provide opportunities for reflection. The author uses sociocultural transformative learning theory to describe the process involved in collaboratively creating artistic books and in describing the personal adaptations that the artists themselves experienced during the bookmaking project. Nine mature artists participated in the art collective. Their work is illustrated in the essay. Although the artists were challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic and the socio-political unrest of the time, they were able to engage in a sense of empowerment and actively maintain their artistic practice. The Images included in the visual essay document the artists' voices and reflect topics of race, gender and age.

Arts in Mind a Multidisciplinary Approach to Museum Programs for Persons Living with Young-Onset and Early-Stage Alzheimer's Disease by Rachel Thompson, Angel Duncan and Jessica Sack discuss how the process of reflecting with people experiencing a form of dementia previously not targeted by museum programming, informs providers, participants and their care partners. The authors report on a museum-based program which they co-developed, for those living with Young-onset Alzheimer's or persons in the early stages of memory loss and their care partners. The authors, an art therapist with experience in Alzheimer's clinical trials research, and two museum educators, worked with persons living with Young-onset Alzheimer's and their care partners to look at and make art together. Sessions are anchored in art encounters that make the art accessible, and that are responsive and experiential. This article describes a successful program responding to a previously unmet need for programming specifically designed for the Young-onset Alzheimer's population and individuals in early stages of the disease.

Intergenerational and Intra generational Connections within a University Art Museum Program for People with Dementia by Sujal Manohar and Jessica Kay Ruhle is a description of a museum program, Reflections, that engages older adults with dementia, their care partners, university students, and museum staff with arts experiences at the Nasher Museum of Art. Guided tours engage participants in reflective conversations around artworks from the rotating museum exhibitions and permanent collection to art making experiences and live music. The impact of Reflection provides opportunities to build stronger relationships between participants with dementia and their partners/caregivers by connecting learning in the museum with their personal lives. The museum and university partners serve as a catalyst for reflection through the arts that can positively impact lifelong learning and strengthen relationships with caregivers.

These seven articles show examples of reflecting. Some of the authors have examined their own art practice and that of their mentors; and others have illustrated programs that use the practice of reflecting as a method of art engagement for those with memory loss and their caregivers. The act of reflecting is a powerful catalyst for appreciating what has taken place and empowering one to move forward. Paul Cezanne is quoted as saying, "Time and reflection change the sight little by little 'til we come to understand" (Seekamp, 1992). May we understand ourselves and those around us a bit better as we take time to reflect. This issue encourages us to do that—engage in reflecting.

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Reference

Seekamp, K. (1992) *Cezanne's background moves to the foreground* (Publication No.1385807) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Louisville] ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.